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BEHIND GRAY WALLS

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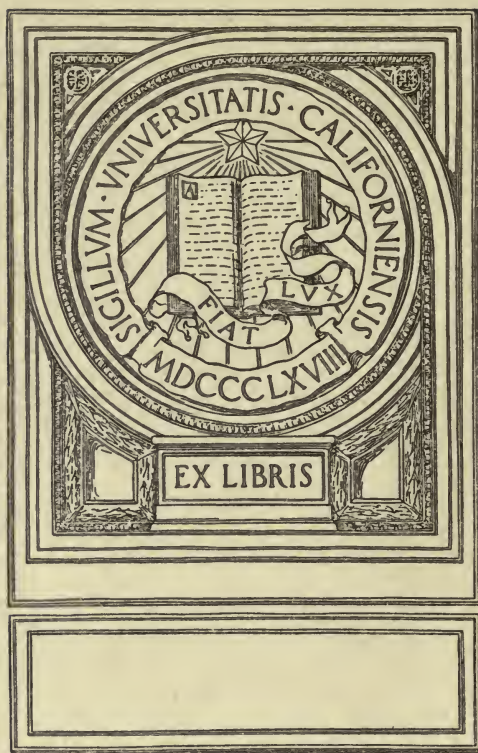


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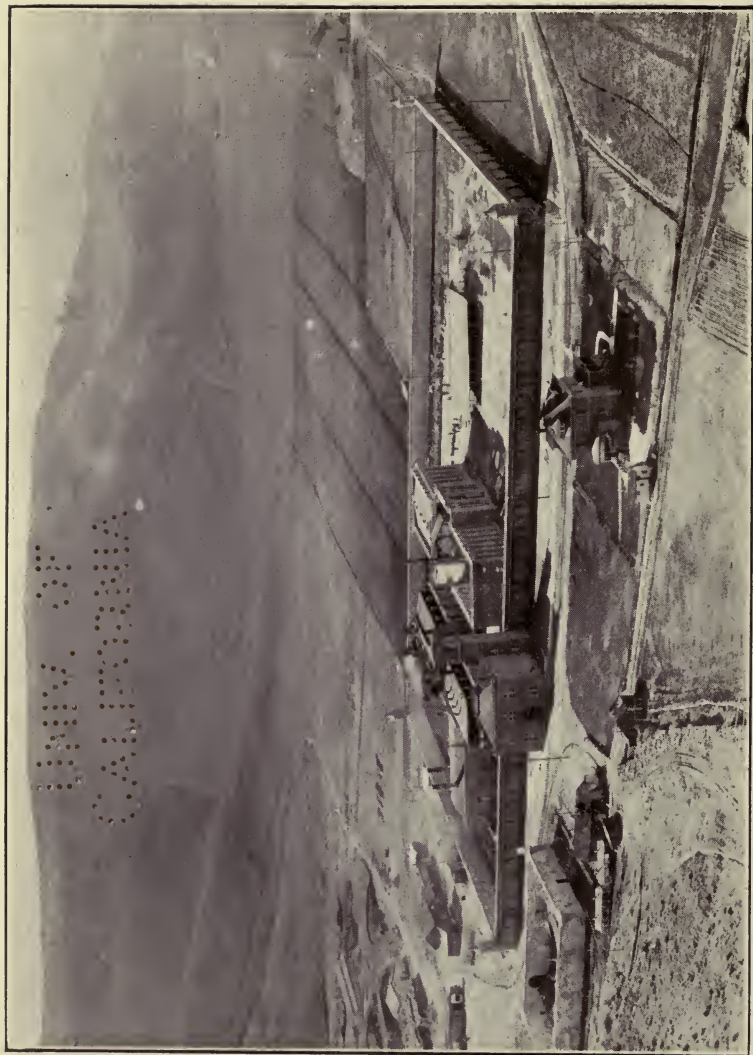
By P.C.MURPHY

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THE IDAHO STATE PENITENTIARY AT BOISE, IDAHO

BEHIND GRAY WALLS

BY

PATRICK C. MURPHY

(Life Prisoner in the Idaho State Penitentiary)

Introduction

by

EARL WAYLAND BOWMAN

HV9475

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to you
August 1920

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By Patrick C. Murphy

Caxton Printers, Ltd.
Caldwell, Idaho
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INTRODUCTION

Some time ago I had a letter from "Pat" Murphy, the man who has written this book. It was a very brief note. It said:

"I am a convict in the Idaho State Penitentiary. My sentence is life imprisonment. I have been here five years. There is an impulse in me to write my experiences since I was put in here, but I do not know how to go about it, or to arrange to have it published after it is written. I have heard of you and that you are a writer. I thought perhaps you would help me."

That note was my introduction to "Pat" Murphy, "lifer" in the Idaho State Penitentiary.

I went out to the penitentiary and talked with Murphy. He looked me straight in the eye when he spoke, in his voice there was the sound of sincerity, his bearing showed that he was a man with Hope in his heart, an objective in life, and a purpose to "go square" and clean.

He told me the story of his experiences since, five years ago, a man without friends and penniless, he was sentenced to life imprisonment behind gray walls.

I did not ask him to tell me anything that happened before the iron doors swung shut behind him. It was none of my business. Who am I that I should part the curtain Time mercifully drops down to separate the Past from the Present in the life of a man?

Only the hand of God has the right to draw back that screen.

After I heard the story "Pat" Murphy told me I said:

"Write it. Write it just as you have told it to me. Make no effort at literary style, don't worry about grammatical construction—use your own language, speak as you have spoken to me—straight from the heart."

I read the story and it appears in this book almost verbatim as Murphy wrote it. I touched it very little.

Mr. Jas. H. Gipson, of Caxton Printers, Caldwell, and a man whom I knew to be an idealist—counting men of more worth than money—became interested and without profit, at actual cost, has published the book, agreeing with me, that the things "Pat" Murphy has done behind prison walls show something that men ought to know.

So, the book is before you.

What you will find in it I cannot say.

This is what I have found:

A man, though plunged into the blackest depths of the abyss can, *if he will*, look up and up and he will find gleaming yet, on the mountain top, a ray of Hope.

And while there is hope in the heart of a man, there is excuse for life.

"Pat" Murphy, convict, sentenced to life imprisonment in the Idaho State Penitentiary, has told something in this roughly written book that he himself has proved true in the five years he has spent behind gray, stone walls. It is this:

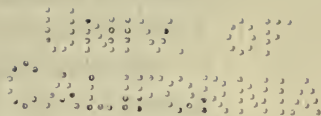
The soul of a man can rise above his physical environment.

—*Earl Wayland Bowman.*

Boise, Idaho.

May 25, 1920.

BEHIND GRAY WALLS



CHAPTER I.

WHEN THE GATES SWUNG SHUT.

It was the dawn of a clear September day in 1915 that I arrived, with one companion, on the early morning train, in Boise, the beautiful capital of Idaho. We were met at the depot by a slender, dark-eyed young fellow who conveyed us to a hack drawn up at the curb and to which was hitched a pair of nervous gray horses. We climbed into the rig and the team was driven swiftly through the business section of the city and turned toward the east, out Warm Springs avenue. My thoughts were quite different from those of most tourists that land for the first time in the charming city of Boise, for I was in irons; my companion was a heavily armed guard who watched my every move.

For fifteen minutes perhaps we drove past stately homes and shaded lawns. Ahead of us, to the right, at some distance a large building loomed before us. At first I thought it was to be our destination, but when we reached it our driver drove straight past it—it was the Natatorium. A few hundred yards farther on we came to a stone-arched gate, beyond that was an open space—like a farm, and against the brown hillside, in the distance, I saw the massive walls of the Idaho State Peniten-

tiary, and within those walls I was soon to be confined for the rest of my natural life—

My eyes searched the premises surrounding the prison for the convict graveyard where I, myself, might find peace when my sentence expired. But as I failed to see any tombstones that represented a graveyard I dismissed the subject from my mind and took a deep breath—as one who feels himself sinking under dark waters—wishing to inhale all of God's free air that was possible.

The vehicle stopped before the prison office. The guard rang a bell to signal the guard on the early morning watch to open the door from within. The door swung open. No word was spoken. We stepped inside, the door closed behind us, a great key was turned in the lock and iron bars and stone walls shut me in forever from

*The fragrant flowers, the growing herds,
The free wild winds and the songs of birds.*

I was then told to remove my clothing and put on a prison suit that had evidently been laid out ready for my arrival. The guard escorted me into the yard and I was locked in a cell.

"Hello, 'fish'!" (a new prisoner) was called from the cell adjoining the one in which I was locked. "Are you Murphy?" my neighbor asked.

"Yes," I answered.

"The judge gave you the 'book' (meaning life term) didn't he?"

Of course he knew I was a 'lifer' before I hit the prison from reading the papers. After firing a few preliminary questions at me he began unraveling his own history. He boasted of serving time

in seven different penitentiaries. He also claimed he had been sentenced three times out of his own home town and since then every distant prison he had served time in quickly got a line on him through his Bertillion being thrown broadcast from his home town—but I thought to myself, “I don’t blame your home town for keeping track of you for you might become lost.” He told me the name of the town that was his birthplace but I have forgotten it. From his conversation I quickly formed an opinion of this bird that later proved correct—either he was trying to pose as a hard-boiled guy or working to draw me out. It was a relief when the bell rang for the early morning unlock and took him away.

Breakfast was served to me in my cell, as all “fish” are kept locked up until they are inspected. Later in the day I was taken to the front office to be Bertillioned and have my picture taken. The cons call it “Getting mugged and your pedigree taken.” There I saw, for the first time, Warden Snook who had been warden several years and was quite an adept at handling the Bertillion system. The warden himself took my height, weight, age, etc. He was very positive in his Bertillion work; he did not try to browbeat me or bulldoze in any way—he simply asked the necessary questions in tones that a man would speak to a man. His last question was:

“How much money have you?”

“Not a cent, Warden.” The guard who brought me answered for me, and that was true. For the first time in many a moon I was absolutely broke.

I was taken back inside and into the bath house and given a bath. Then to the tailor shop and measured for clothing. From the tailor shop they took me to the barber shop to be shaved and it was there I saw the face, for the first time, of my early morning neighbor. He was talking in a loud, boisterous way as we entered. When he saw me he stopped as though to get his breath and then shouted "Hello, Murphy," and shoved a large freckled hand at me as though I was a long-lost brother, but I did not look up or speak and stepped into an empty barber chair as I had been beckoned to do by a barber. The party who wished to greet me looked silly, grinned, and sat down. You see this fellow could do a little extra choring, clean spittoons and occasionally shave a man to get the privilege of lounging in the barber shop and "pop" off. The barbers are continually bothered with this kind of cattle. I never could learn why all the gossipers in the penitentiary have a craving desire to loaf in the barber shop. Nor can I see how the barbers can stand it, for myself I hate to see shave day come for the few minutes I have to sit in the barber chair and listen to this peculiar class. You see no shop has a regular guard in it; each shop has a prisoner acting as head man and it is almost impossible for one prisoner to keep another prisoner out of a state shop, but the yard guards make frequent trips to all shops during the day. I have seen a bunch of these loafers run out of the barber shop and as soon as the guard is gone, in ten minutes they are sneaking back.

After I was shaved I was taken to the store

room before the captain of the yard. I was given a number, assigned to a regular cell. My number was 2338. That meant 2338 prisoners had been received at the penitentiary during the sixty years it had been in existence.

The captain took me in charge and across the yard to a different cell house from the one I had previously been in. He showed me the cell to which I was to come when the whistle was sounded for lock-up and count every evening. He then gave me some general instructions about where the "dead-line" was; not to go to the shops without a guard; how, when and where to go when meal time came. Then I was permitted to go to the yard and mingle with the other men. But I was inclined to be distant and did not mix up. That night I found in my cell a library catalogue with the numbers of 4,000 books which are available for the use of the prisoners. This was an agreeable surprise to me for I could at least read. Ahead were the years—"Until the end of your natural life," and books promised to make less dreary those years behind the gray stone walls.

CHAPTER II.

GOOD ADVICE FROM AN OLD 'CRACKSMAN'

The first night in my own cell I noticed a card stuck to the wall and on it the rules a prisoner should obey. At the bottom of the card in large print were these words:

"Any prisoner wilfully breaking the rules will be forced to forfeit all of his good time."

In other words he would automatically sentence himself to a longer period of time. I thought to myself:

"Well, I'm in the mire as far as they can get me so it's up to me to pull myself out. Maybe some day I will get this life sentence cut down to a point where it might put me on the level with those who are fortunate enough to have good time to lose." And I may add here that time off for good conduct is a powerful stimulant to discipline and obedience in prison. Hope is hard to die. It seems that any man—even a lifer—can dream of a day when things will be different.

It was a few days after this first night that I made the acquaintance of an old safe blower, John B., who had approached me in the yard. I saw at a glance that he was more intelligent than the aver-

age con I had seen so far and I ventured to ask him a few questions about the place.

He was willing to talk.

"Well, Murph," he said as he took a seat on a nearby rock and motioned me to sit beside him, "there is one thing I want to put you wise to, that is, *do your own time*. Don't let no one here draw you out in talking about your case, your past, your intentions, or know your business in any way, shape or form. I have noticed you have been rather distant—stay that way. I have learned from many years' experience that it is your fellow prisoner you want to look out for. Most of the officials here ain't a bad bunch of fellows and the guards are most apt to report things just as they are, while some of the cons will stretch the truth and manufacture stuff in order to try to get themselves to the 'front'."

The aged cracksman lit his pipe which had gone out while he was talking, and continued:

"I am just finishing a ten to twenty-five year sentence. I got the top twenty-five years cut off so it leaves me ten to do and with good time off I will just have to do seven years solid in all which I will have finished in a few months."

His story made me see the value of the last clause on the rule card. Then I ventured to ask him about Harry Orchard of whom I had read a great deal.

"Oh, yes," he said. "Harry is in charge of the shoe shop. Three other cons work in there with him. They mend the shoes for all the inmates.

Harry attends strictly to his own business and doesn't bother anybody. You seldom see him in the yard—he prefers to work all the time.”

Just then I observed a large audience of cons that had collected around a big chunk of human flesh a few yards away. The center of attraction was rehearsing in boastful tones the many sensational and hair-breadth escapes he had made in robbing banks. As he put it he did not stop at anything less than First Nationals. He was simply darkening the sky with flying fragments of bank vaults which he was unmercifully ripping to pieces with his “soup” (nitro-glycerine).

He was the same fellow who had tried to force his acquaintance upon me when I was first locked in a cell. A guard had just run him and his audience out of the barber shop and he was continuing his open air oration of bravado and criminal daring. The thought struck me that he had steered them to that particular spot so as to be in earshot of me and make me feel that I had made a mistake in not accepting his offered hand when I first entered the barber shop, when I had a chance to give his followers an impression that I was quite fortunate to know a noted bear-cat like him.

“Who and what is that fellow?” I asked the old cracksman sitting beside me.

“Oh,” he said laughing, “I call him ‘Gossiping Joe.’ He is one of the worst stool pigeons in here. He will peddle that hot air stuff to them poor boobs and if he can get one of them to drop a remark he can patch up and add to, he will then report it to one of the officials.” He paused a moment and

added: "Yes, and that bird would hang you for 25 cents or for a shot of snow (cocaine). But as a rule these old officials are wise to him and his kind. That rough stuff don't get him anywhere and instead of him being a 'pete-man' (a safe blower) he is nothing but a cheese and cracker weeder (a petty larceny thief). The bank he boasts of serving time for robbing was a little grocery store run by an old widow woman that had seven children to support and the big bunch of money he claims he got away with was a roll of cheese and a sack of crackers. The next morning the marshal followed him by the crackers that had dropped through the hole in the sack. He was found asleep in the brush and was using the roll of cheese for a pillow. The only weapon he had was a deadly appetite and now he has the nerve to say he was nabbed through his own carelessness by dropping \$20 gold pieces in making his get-away—the gold pieces were only crackers!" and the old cracksman laughed scornfully.

CHAPTER III.

IN BAD AT THE START.

Just ten days after I was landed at the penitentiary I was picked out of the main line as it came out of the dining room from dinner. The guard took me to my own cell and I was told to get my blankets and then was taken down to the hard-boiled row and locked in a cell. In a few moments they brought in six more, mostly all long timers. The hard-boil, you understand, is a row of ten cells on the ground floor of No. 1 cell house.

The first one of these cells is the death cell which was occupied at that time by Charlie George who was sentenced to be hanged but was later commuted to life in prison. He is a trusty now, outside the walls, and is making good. The other nine cells were for men who had been ordered, or sentenced, to solitary confinement.

Why I was put in solitary at this time I did not know, but was sure it was a rank piece of jobbery. The first thing that flashed to my mind was the thought that some of the petty offenders that were in jail where I was sentenced and after I had been taken out had told some undersheriff that wanted to be important that I intended to beat the dump as soon as I hit here. Their intentions in telling some-

thing of that kind to make a hit with the jailor and possibly get their own time cut down.

Of course the jailor would report such word to the penitentiary and on the strength of this I would be confined to solitary without even getting a hearing before the warden. But I could not understand why the other men were there also.

In a few days I learned that we all had been ordered to solitary through fear of a break, as it had been reported that a bunch was going to try and beat the dump.

It developed that a short timer doing from one to fourteen years had gone to a few long timers who were foolish enough to listen to him and had told them how sorry he was for them and him being acquainted with the surrounding country—claiming he had friends living in the distant hills—he would be glad to go with them, help them escape and make a successful get-away. He pictured in a dime novel way how they could charge a tower guard with rocks and while some of the bunch ran to the dining room and got tables which they could place against the wall and run right over to liberty like sheep out of a corral.

Of course he knew they would be running right into the jaws of death, even if they got that far. But that made no difference to him. He wanted to work the thing up to the boiling point, thinking maybe he would get a feather in his cap. Of course I knew nothing of all this and being a new arrival and a stranger it isn't possible that anyone, had they had such intentions, would be apt to tell me. and I am morally certain I had never spoken to this

dime novel fiend. He would go to the warden and tell him the men's secrets and that they wanted him as their leader. Then he would tell the warden they were to meet him at a certain time in a certain place in the yard when the plans were to be talked over. Then he would go to his victims in the yard and tell them to meet him at that place and they would figure things out. As a precaution, naturally, the wall guards would by this time have been given orders to be on the lookout and when this secret meeting was held they would phone a report to the office and so apparently the stool-pigeon's statements would seem to be corroborated.

In this case I think he went so far in his imagination as to even manufacture some guns that were supposed to be smuggled in. He was double-crossing the cons and he was double-crossing the warden.

I could never understand why he implicated me unless he took a dislike to my looks or thought I was an ignorant kind of a fellow and would be an easy victim. At least I was a "fish" and a lifer and would make pretty good bait. So I suppose he just put me down as one of those fellows they say are born every minute—an easy mark. The time I had to do also would probably influence the warden to think I was in on the plot and in so much as I was charged with the murder of a man supposed to be an officer would convince the prison authorities that I was a dangerous man to be running loose in the yard. Under these circumstances naturally the warden would not overlook a bet that would give him a chance to lock me up.

But if that is what the bird thought he was wrong in his judgment of the warden. For Snook looked at a man for what he was and not for what he had done. He would not knowingly persecute any man because he was a prisoner.

When he ordered me locked up he believed he was in the right. He was going away that day and from the reports that had come to him I suppose he felt that he was justifiable and did not wish to take any chances. Only a few months previous to this a break had been made in practically the same way this one was supposed to be pulled off. Out of the bunch that made the rush to get over the walls three got over entirely, one of them was killed outright and two others were shot down and maimed for life.

So, here I was, a stranger in a strange land; stripped of every penny and of course without friends, and starting on a life sentence by getting in bad right on the jump-off. And to think it was a fellow-prisoner who had lied to get me in solitary to further his own selfish cause filled my heart with hell and hate.

In the blackness of that cell, seemingly, with all the world against me and not even the sympathy of cons like myself who were shut out from everything that makes life worth while what other feelings but feelings of passionate resentment against the whole scheme of life could I have? I sweat nitric acid. The drops of perspiration that dampened my forehead would have poisoned a rattlesnake. In them was the venom of utter despair and yet--

some way I mastered those feelings and a stubborn calm settled over me.

I would not have minded it so bad had it been really true that there was a plot or that I was in it. I would have taken my medicine without a murmur. But getting it dead wrong was what hurt. I swore right then I would never speak or associate with another prisoner unless I knew for sure he meant me no harm. And I made up my mind, too, that even then I would utter no remark that I would not say in front of the warden and the whole world. Although I was in as bad a fix it seemed as a man could possibly be, right there I determined to come out of it and raise up in an honest way above the rat who had got me in solitary.

After a month in solitary the warden had me brought out to the front office. He did not speak for a minute or two but just sat there and looked at me as if to study me. I thought: "If you think I am going to cringe or beg you to let me out of solitary you are mistaken—I'll stay in there till moss grows on my back before I'll ask to get out."

Finally Warden Snook spoke and his voice was pleasant: "Say, Pat," he said, "I believe I have made a mistake in your case. After sifting this thing out and the reports that have come to me, I cannot understand how a man with your intelligence will come here in this prison with a life sentence to do and on a ten-day acquaintance start telling every Tom, Dick and Harry that you are going over the walls. I can't hardly believe it and I'm going to turn you out in the yard."

"That's all right," I said, "but how long will it

be before you fall for another frame-up like this and throw me back into solitary? And further, Warden, I want you to understand that if a fellow-inmate had come to me in there and passed a remark or given me a secret and asked me to keep it, if I had promised him I would do so I would keep that promise. I would not tell you or any other man for what I know I would die knowing and with it untold."

"Well," Warden Snook answered, "if you think so much of your promise that you will keep it with a con no doubt you will hold it with me when you know and I know it was the lies of a fellow-prisoner that got you in there."

"Yes," I said, "Warden, if you care to take a chance with me by giving me the liberty of the yard I will see that you never have occasion to regret it." And he never did.

Snook seemed to like the way I talked to him. He believed in fair play and would fire a guard in a minute if he knew he was trying to bulldoze or persecute a prisoner for he knew that a guard that would do that was a coward and Snook hated a coward because he himself feared neither man nor devil.

CHAPTER IV.

THE SOLACE OF LABOR.

Along in November when cold weather came we could go into Cell House No. 3. This building was the oldest and first put up at the prison. It is over sixty years old. The walls are of stone, of course; the cells are brick, some of the bars on the outer windows are wood and the building is pretty well dilapidated so only trusties are allowed to sleep in these cells at night although the corridors are used for all the idle men to spend the day in during the winter.

It was there I first got introduced to the junk-making, as the cons call it. Junk means any kind of souvenirs that are made here in the prison whether they are belts, bridles, charms, or other trinkets. They all come under that heading. And a poor grade of junk is called bull's wool junk.

Some of the men, I noticed, had short boards bolted onto the steam pipes which answered the purpose of a kind of work bench. The tools they used were very crude but nevertheless the boys seemed to be busy turning out some very beautiful articles. The files and hacksaws they had would be turned in to the captain at the store-room each evening and in his presence they were counted and

then locked up until the following day. The silver used in making the articles is ordered from the east and the shell from California.

Each man that had junk was allowed one display tray in the library of the penitentiary with his name on it and the librarian who is also a prisoner would keep a check on all these trays and keep them clean. He sells the articles to visitors who come through to visit the prison. The junk men pay him a small commission on each item sold. After a sale is made the guard who has the visitor in charge takes the money and a slip of paper from the librarian, stating from whose tray the junk was bought, and turns the money in at the front office where it is put to the credit of the con whose junk was sold. The clerk and librarian both keep separate books on these junk sales so there is never any mistake. All are treated fair. It is a great help to the men, for they can use the money to buy tobacco, butter, and such things as they need. And the work is a great relief to the men who cannot stand to be idle. It helps the long hours to pass more quickly and gives their mind occupation and keeps them from brooding over things too much.

As I wanted to be doing something I soon found a job working for another junk dealer who had a full outfit. They called this fellow "Blackie."

I worked for Blackie all winter. The two of us made several dollars' worth of junk and in the spring after we had finished he handed me \$6.00 worth of bull's-wool junk for my work. I felt like telling him he had better keep it but I needed

money too badly, so I sold what junk he gave me to another inmate for the cut price of \$1.40 cash.

"Now I have got a start," I thought. "With that \$1.40 I will make it." In other words, I picked up hope.

With the 40 cents I bought some broken rough shell from another junk man. The dollar I sent to Chicago for silver. I am sure it was the smallest order of silver that ever came into this prison. Since then I have sent in some of the largest orders and received some of the biggest shipments of silver that ever came into any prison and some of the boys who no doubt criticized my first little order have lately been glad to borrow silver from my large orders.

About this time the days were getting warmer and the captain in charge—Captain Roberts—stopped the junk men who had plenty of junk made up from sending out for more silver. But he knew how I was situated and let my little order go out. Captain Roberts was a good, broad-minded man, and all the cons liked him.

But I had no tools and I would not ask the other junk dealers to loan me any of theirs. So during the days while I was waiting for the silver to arrive I took the broken pieces of shell I had bought with the forty cents, out into the yard, got a rock and rubbed them down and shaped them with my hands on the face of the piece of rock. Then I broke and chisled a small rock till I got it so it would answer the purpose and took it into Cell House No. 3 and made a wooden frame for it; put a crank to it, and I was ready for business as

soon as my silver arrived. It was certainly a crude affair but it was my starter.

When the silver came I worked it up into watch fobs and inlaid each fob with a piece of shell. The spring was advancing and the warm weather had drawn most of the men out into the yard so I was practically working alone in No. 3 house. There were, however, a couple of loafers who constantly sneaked around to spy on me, to see, I suppose, that I didn't make any gatling guns or perhaps they thought I was going to make an airship and fly right over the walls and they wanted to be handy so they could grab me if I tried it. Anyhow, I was a lifer and in their judgment no doubt dangerous and since I had been in solitary they probably figured that was where I belonged all the time. But whatever the reports these reptiles carried they did not influence Warden Snook for he never bothered me after the day he turned me out of solitary. But they must have got in their work on a certain new guard who was a greenhorn and who had just come in from the sheep camps and been given a job at the prison. This important limb of the law would make frequent trips to see me and find out what I was doing. He would slip up behind me like a modern Sherlock Holmes—as he thought, and I let him think it—although I always knew it before he got to me. I never let on. Sometimes he would stall around as if admiring the fobs I was making, but I easily read his face and actions and was sure he would like to get hold of something that would get me into trouble and at the same time make him

appear important. But he never got it because there was nothing to get.

One fine day just as I had finished making up the fobs Captain Roberts came in.

"Well, Pat, how are you getting along?" he asked pleasantly.

I told him I had finished.

"Well, when you are all through, I want to lock the house up to keep these loafers out—we always lock this house," he added, "when cold weather is over, but I will leave it open as long as you want to work on your fobs."

I thanked him and told him I had worked up all my material. It seemed to please him to get to fire those loafers out. Captain Roberts was sure wise to their kind.

Then I placed my fobs on display in the library, went out into the yard and looked for a hang-out. I picked out a spot right in the center of the yard where there was a large flat rock about five feet square and one foot high. It was settled some in the ground so when I would become tired of sitting up I could lie down on top of it or to one side and use the edge for a pillow.

The reason I selected that spot was because it was very unattractive and I would very likely have it alone during the summer. In addition to that it was right under the vigilance of all the wall and yard guards, and that would make it easier for me to keep from being the victim of another frame-up.

I always had a library book in my hands and usually spent the days reading. When anyone came around and started to talk to me I would not look

up or answer them but just kept on reading, so my silence would soon drive them away. Of course when the old pete-man (safe-cracker) or John Fleming, another lifer, or some old con that I knew was all right and meant me no harm came along I would not care to hurt their feelings and would speak. But they seemed to understand how I felt and would usually merely pass the time of day and go on their way.

Along in June I found some bones that had been thrown out from the kitchen. I gathered them up and took them down to my rock and worked or rubbed them on the rock with my hands till I got them into twenty-four pieces and made twenty-four bone toothpicks. These I added to my other collection of junk in the library. It was a job to make them. I would rub the bone on the rock till the blood would run out of my hand, but it gave me satisfaction, for it was putting me on my feet. Besides that I was making something useful out of something that wasn't of any value before I worked on it.

Under circumstances like mine there is a good deal of pleasure in work of any kind.

CHAPTER V.

A PLEASANT SURPRISE.

One night when I returned to my cell I found a little surprise. A feather pillow, two pillow slips, two bed sheets, a bed spread and quite a few other little trinkets that a prisoner needs in his cell had been left in mine. These are things the state does not furnish us. The only way we get them is by friends sending them to us or we buy them ourselves if we have the money. I had neither friends nor money so I was at a loss to know how the things came there. I had been using my coat for a pillow up to that time.

When I found the things in my cell I thought it might be another frame-up. So, when the janitor came around I asked him if there hadn't been a mistake and showed him the articles. He laughed and said there hadn't been any mistake, that John B., the aged safe blower had given them to him and told him to put them in my cell and had forbidden him to let me know anything about it until I came in and found them myself.

Then I remembered that John B. had gone out that day and that he had come around and told me good-bye. He had evidently taken all of his belongings and taken them to my cell upon his leav-

ing. Not only that, but the clerk told me next morning that John B. had left \$10 to my credit in the front office. The old safe-blower had offered me money to buy material with when he saw me rubbing down the rough bones on the rock, trying to make toothpicks of them. But I had refused to accept a cent and the only way he no doubt thought I would accept the things was to leave them in my cell and let me find them after he was gone.

The things were a pleasant surprise.

It happened one Sunday, that summer, that Judge Morgan, of the Supreme Court of Idaho, came out to the prison and gave us a lecture on Prison Reform.

Warden Snook brought him in and introduced him to us. Judge Morgan made a very interesting talk. He seemed to be connected with the Prison Reform people outside some way. He wanted us to get together and suggest some sane and sensible bills to be passed before the legislature for our benefit. He and other influential citizens would take them up and go before the legislature with them, and plead for their passage. This he did and later one good bill he had was creating the office of Parole Officer, which the state never had before.

After the meeting was over a most beautiful gang of cut-throats and men of the most degenerate crimes made a high dive for the learned judge. They all tried to talk to him at once—each about his own personal case and self and of course had a purpose. Some had the judge by the arm, some by the collar, all telling him they were innocent and shouldn't be here, believing, I suppose, that as he

was judge of the Supreme Court all that was necessary for him to do, which no doubt he would, they thought, was for him to order the warden to turn them right out—not only that but in all probability he would tell the district judge that sent them there where to get off.

I wanted to go up and thank the judge for the interest he was taking in our welfare, but I could not get near him for the innocent lambs that had him surrounded. But I think he was dead wise to them for he kept one hand tightly gripped on his watch.

In order for Judge Morgan to get away from this bunch he put them off by telling them to write a letter stating their cases, which of course they did. And to show you I was right when I said the judge was wise to these doves I will quote here the answer he wrote to them. He said:

“You say you are innocent. Maybe you are. I would advise you, if you are innocent, to take your case before the Board of Pardons, whose duties it is to act in such cases. I am voluntarily taking this extra work upon myself for you men for the benefit of all, not a special few. The work I am undertaking is to reform the wrong-doer, however, if you are innocent, I can do nothing for you. It is the guilty I am after who need reforming, that need to be built up that they may come back into society better men.”

That gave these hypocrites something to gossip about. They told the contents of the letter around the yard. We all know it by heart. They said:

"Judge Morgan was a false alarm and it was only politics that brought him in here," etc.

This reminds me of a story I heard one time. It happened in an eastern state. The governor was going through a large penitentiary. He was asking each man what he was in for, how long he was doing, etc. He would wind up by asking each individual if he was guilty and really committed the act. Each man he came to would claim to be innocent. As the governor went farther and farther down the line his face became graver and graver. After he had interviewed several hundred, he came to one firm, tough looking little fellow. The governor said:

"Well, what are you here for?"

"Burglary," was the prompt reply.

"How long are you doing?" was the next question.

"Ten years," the con belched out.

"Well," the governor said, "I suppose you were innocent——" and paused.

"No, sir, I was guilty as hell!" the con snapped back.

"My, this will never do," the governor said. "It will never do to leave a guilty man here with all these innocent men! I will have to pardon you at once to get you away from here."

Judge Morgan came to the prison once more. That time he brought with him Judge McCarthy of the circuit court, and J. R. Compton, a prominent citizen of Boise. They held a mass meeting in the dining room with the cons. That was the last time Judge Morgan ever came out to see us. Some few

said by him not coming out to see us it was proof enough he was not sincere, but I am inclined to think the man became utterly disgusted by some of the hypocrites trying to buttonhole him for their own selfish ends.

Speaking of J. R. Compton, he has come out to visit the boys nearly every Sunday since I have been here and lots of times on week days. He encourages shows and entertainments to come to the prison for our benefit, he helps men in here and helps them when they go out on pardon or parole, finding them work or giving them money from his own pocket to keep them up until they can get work. Of course once in a while men who went out have thrown him down by failing to make good, but Mr. Compton never becomes discouraged. He goes right on helping the next man. He volunteered and acted as our parole officer before that office was created and has never at any time received a cent from the state of Idaho for what he has done. Naturally, most of the cons look on him as a friend.

CHAPTER VI.

STARTING A BUSINESS UNDER DIFFICULTIES.

At the beginning of my second winter here I got a board three feet long and put up a kind of work bench on the steam pipes in No. 3 House. The only place left for me because the other junk men had grabbed the best locations was where there was poor light. The spaces in front of the windows had been grabbed by other junk men the winter before.

The second morning I returned to work at my bench I found it down on the floor, the taps and bolts I had fastened it to the pipes with had been removed. I got another set, but this time I pounded and jammed up the threads on the ends of the bolts so the taps could not be taken off. I have always thought some jealous junk maker that didn't want to see anyone get in the junk business had torn up my lay-out and so tried to discourage me. But it had just the opposite effect. I became more determined than ever. The little bank roll I had accumulated from my few sales in the library and the \$10 that John B. left in the office for me, I soon blowed for material and tools. I bought a small collection of cast-away and dilapidated tools that another junk dealer had discarded. I paid

him \$3.00 for these tools. The rest of my money, which was about \$16, I invested in material.

All winter I worked alone at my bench. One day, early in the winter a sorry looking, tall bean-pole with two legs who was another junk maker before a window in part of the building invited himself over to my bench, pushed some of my articles out of the way and flopped down on one end of it.

"I am sorry to see you working so hard, inhaling all that shell dust which you have to do grinding the shell down in this kind of work," he said, trying to discourage me. "Don't you know there is nothing in making junk? It costs nearly as much for the material as you get out of it."

He told me he had been making junk for several years, and did not average over \$15.00 a year. "If I were you, Murphy," he continued, "I would quit it." I thanked him for the information—and kept right on at work.

The blow-torch I had was made from a small oil can. It held about a half a pint. I had rolled up a piece of cloth for wick and in order to throw the flame from the wick onto the article I wished to heat or solder together I used a little tube about a foot long. I would blow through one end while I held the other close to the blaze and in this way would blow the flame onto the article. It was a crude affair but I managed to make it do. The oil I burnt in this I got from an old life-timer, John Fleming, who was in charge of the oil house. He looked after the coal oil used in the prison and dished it out and the oil that was spilled and was

so trashy with dirt it could not be used run into a waste pan. It was no good to the state so he would bottle it up and bring it and give it to me. I would strain it and get all the trash out of it and use it in my hand-made torch.

You see all the junk men have to have heat for all the silver work. Each souvenir of that kind is two pieces soldered together—the front piece is cut down in a way that it can be inlaid with shell, while the back piece is solid.

Old John Fleming was an interesting character. He was sentenced to be hanged in 1908 for killing a man over a water-right quarrel. He was in the death cell eighteen months and came within a few hours of the gallows. The rope was stretched and ready, he had been given his last shave and bath and everybody thought he was a goner. The night before he was to go, about nine or ten o'clock, word came that he was commuted to life in prison. When the guard came in and told him the news John merely said: "That's carrying a joke a long ways!"

John Fleming is now nearly 70 years of age and has recently got the life sentence cut down and I think he will be free in a few months. Old John and myself were always good friends. He seemed to be square in all his dealings and is now a trusty outside the walls. He has built a little corral out there for the purpose of raising rabbits. Every Sunday he brings me a rabbit. The warden lets the cooks prepare anything like that for the men, but they are not allowed to eat it at the dining table during mealtime, in front of the other prisoners who are less fortunate. I have always thought

that this order from Warden Cuddy was a good one for it hurts men to have one of their number sit down among them and enjoy an extra dainty even if it isn't state food. So anything our friends send us or that we buy ourselves we eat in the yard or in our cells.

The beginning of my second winter here the election changed the politics in Idaho and that changed all prison officials.

Frank E. DeKay came as our new warden and brought with him an entire new crew. Shortly after their arrival we were marching out of the dining room on the way to our cells after supper. To one side stood the new captain and a few guards. Word had been passed that it was to be Roberts' last day. He was to leave on the night train. I wanted to shake hands with him before he left and when I came opposite the place where they stood I made away and dropped my arms from the folded position and deliberately bolted out of the line, walked over to the old fellow, shook hands with him and told him good-bye. I can truthfully say that he was the first policeman of any kind I ever shook hands with.

The man behind me followed suit—then the whole line swung over as if they were all of the same mind and as each man passed Roberts they shook his hand, for they all liked him. There were some few, too, that would shrink from shaking hands in front of his fellow-prisoners through fear they might be ridiculed by someone for shaking hands with a guard of any kind; but when they saw, as they believed, one of the hardest nuts in the

stir (prison) who would shake hands with a screw (guard) deliberately break line to do it they obeyed the feelings of their hearts and did the same. The new guards looked dumfounded while the old skipper seemed to enjoy it. They could not accuse me of hypocrisy because Roberts was leaving and no doubt forever and there was but little chance of any favors from him in return; but he had treated me as a man and all I had to offer him as a matter of appreciation was my heart and hand.

A con came to me the next morning and said:

"Say, Pat, you were foolish to break the line last evening, they might have put you in the hara-boil for that. Furthermore you might have stung the new captain, you see he and Roberts are opposite politics and he is taking Roberts' job—they may not feel very well toward one another."

"That's just the reason I wanted to shake hands with him—nobody could say I was playing the hypocrite," I answered.

Roberts would never let a con hang around him and try to button-hole him and come running to him with their little gossip. He spoke but very little and thought lots. I never knew him to laugh, once in a great while he would smile. On the death of a prisoner I could notice he felt sad. He was as decent a screw as I ever came in contact with.

CHAPTER VII.

WHITEWASHING DARK WALLS.

Shortly after DeKay became warden he said he had arranged with the attorney general to allow all state papers to come into the prison. He got good applause from the cons on this announcement for never before were we allowed Idaho papers. We could get all magazines and outside of the state papers we wanted but they would not let us see papers published in Idaho. DeKay then told us he was going to treat us right and he would like for us to treat him the same way. He wound up by saying, "I am going 50-50 with you fellows and will meet you that way."

After that the cons always called him "Fifty-Fifty." The new force of guards he brought with him were nearly all inexperienced men. Most of them had never seen a penitentiary or been an officer of any kind. But as a rule their intentions were good. During his two years in office DeKay had seven different captains of the yard. They came and went.

In the spring following my second winter, 1917, I had a nice little collection of junk. Over \$100 worth. I made an improvement on the display tray

business that proved so good all the cons copied from me.

During that summer DeKay was having a lot of improvements done in the prison, such as painting all the bars, steel, woodwork, and the insides of the walls of all the buildings which were stone were whitewashed. Captain Sebin who was DeKay's fourth captain in charge of the whitewash gang, picked me for one of his crew. Whitewashing was finished in a few days, and Old Man Lester, who was Deputy Warden, and in charge of the paint crew, was having his troubles keeping the men at work. Some of the boys would tell him they were painters and they would turn out to be fakes. You see it was a favor to be put on a working gang for the men working got three meals a day, while those who were idle only got two.

The warden before DeKay, and the one now, gave three meals to everybody except during the short winter days, then the idle men are cut to two meals a day. But DeKay gave only two meals during his entire term to the idle men but he did his best to keep all he could at work. As we had finished whitewashing Old Man Lester had fired his paint crew and Captain Sebin did not like for me to go back to two meals as I had worked good for him. So he pointed me out to the deputy as a good man (so I found later)—at any rate the old deputy came to me and asked me if I was a painter. I told him I was not.

"Well, you are just the man I am looking for then," he said, "you will try and that is more than these painters (?) will do!"

I thanked him and went to work.

Later on office work called the Old Deputy out front most of the time and Captain Sebin took the paint crew. He would fire painters right and left but would never say a word to me. He would come around—not speak—just look at my work and go away. I could not understand this for I had never buttonholed him in order to get a stand-in like I had seen others do. I was the last one on the job when the last paint was spread. A con trusty told me that he had heard Sebin putting in a good word out front for me. He said he heard Sebin tell DeKay that “The painting would never have been finished if it hadn’t been for Pat Murphy.”

My sales from the Library during the summer had piled up quite a few dollars for I had denied myself quite a few little things a con usually spends money for so I was ready now to build up my junk making outfit. I soon found a man who had a good outfit for sale. I bought it from him for \$25 cash. In the deal I got his work bench six feet long and his place at the window. So with my old outfit combined with his made me as well fixed for tools and a place to work as anyone in No. 3 House. Then I bought a genuine blow-torch for \$5.00. This was the only blow-torch owned by a con in the prison at that time and the first one that had ever been brought into No. 3 House. But all junk men have them now. It happened that this con I bought the torch from had always worked in a state shop and had been given the privilege to buy this torch to work junk as a side-line.

My material had arrived and I was now well

fixed for work. I was able to keep two or three men working for me. But I paid them different from the way I myself had been paid for my first winter's work. If some fellow came around and wanted to work and earn enough money to advertise his case in order to get before the Board of Pardons, which was usually \$5.00, I would let him work awhile until he had earned that amount. Sometimes I paid some of these poor fellows for work when I did not need their help.

Along in the winter I was running short on money and materials. So I would slough off a bunch of finished trinkets at a cut rate price to some fellow who had friends outside who would help sell the articles for him and instead of having him transfer the money to me I would let him send away and order me the material instead.

About this time a fish was brought to the prison by the name of Dan Ruth. Dan was also a lifer and was put in the cell with me. He seemed to be a nice quiet fellow so we became friends and partners in the junk business. Dan lived in the neighborhood of Weiser, Idaho; had money and lots of friends outside to sell the junk for him. So he agreed to back me temporarily in money matters. With my little crew of three in Cell House No. 3, I would work the junk through the day and at night in our cell Dan and I would polish and shine the articles up until lights out at 9:30 o'clock. Then Dan would write to his friends and get them to sell the junk and we would split the money.

After a little while I got the idea of fixing up trays of junk to send out and having a display card

with each bunch. The card would tell where, how and by whom the junk was made. Since I had no friends to write to I hadn't used my writing privilege up to this time, so Dan gave me the addresses of some business people and I would use my Sundays' writing privilege to write to them and ask them if they would sell the articles for me. Once in a great while I would receive a favorable answer.

Then I got started getting addresses from newspapers and by asking incoming fish, also the guards would help me this way. Sometimes I would go a long time without getting a single answer but I never gave up. I kept writing.

The following spring Dan was put in the kitchen to help the cooks, so I lost my cell partner for he was to be on the early unlock and had to be moved down from the third tier where we were celling to a bottom tier of cells where all the men on that unlock were kept. Then I sold him my interest in the junk we had out and we ceased to be partners in the junk business.

After the junk work was stopped and No. 3 House closed up during the days in the spring I loafed around the yard until June.

CHAPTER VIII.

EXPERIMENTS IN PRISON REFORM.

Captain Sebin, the man I had painted under, had exchanged jobs with the turnkey so we had our fifth captain in a little more than a year under Warden DeKay. This new captain may have meant all right but it seemed to me he did not know much about men, or he may have had in mind a prison or two where "prison reform" went too far into the future—that is where cons are allowed to govern themselves but naturally enough that proves a failure.

The kind of men in a prison as a rule are not very good at governing themselves or maybe they would not be there.

Prison reform is all right and it helps cons. It does away with the old brutal treatment which has been the curse of many prisons, but when a prison loses all discipline and cons boss cons, allowance out each other's food, or have the power to place men from job to job, it is going a little too far. It is mighty near sure to be a failure. One con does not like to be bossed by another con that is just as bad as he. And then the cons that get the upper hand are usually selfish—they get it by having more cheek than the rest—and it is their nature to try to

pull their own friends up who are in many cases the most undeserving, then men who may be good men but are quiet fellows and of a retiring nature are elbowed back.

It seemed to me like this new captain ought to put me to work because I had been tried with the painting gang the summer before and had made good. But he didn't.

I ventured to ask him a time or two to be put to work but he didn't have time to talk to me because he was so busy being buttonholed by some bon-ton, or was arguing the price of sheep with some sheep-herder who had been sent up from the sheep district. Then I would see men who had come to the prison long after I had and been tried out and failed and yet they were given good jobs. Or maybe a fish who had just come into the prison and happened to know some other con that had a swing with the bon-ton gang would be given a job. That always disgusted me. It seems to me that a man should be treated for what he is himself, whether in a prison or outside, and not according to the influence or pull that others may have.

Warden DeKay and Deputy Warden Lester were busy with men working outside and of course did not know of all this favoritism.

One day when DeKay was inside the yard I collared him. "Say, Warden," I said, "didn't I understand you to say you would go fifty-fifty with the men, when you came here?"

"That's just what I said, Pat," he replied.

"Well, let me tell you something, Warden," I said. "I have been in this prison three years and as

far as I know my record's clean. I have been tried at work and made good and you know it—I painted this whole penitentiary for you last summer when others shirked on you. Now, every day I see cons who have come to the prison long after I did and who are put to work. Some of them are new men who you have trusted outside. They have throwed you down and now are given good jobs right over my head. I have tried to be a man, Warden, and am now left in idleness—if you call that 50-50 I would like to know what you call 99-to-1. I don't ask you to take the responsibility of putting me outside but give me a job inside the walls and a job where I will not have a convict for a boss!"

So DeKay gave me the job of head janitor in Cell House No. 1 and I have held this place until now. It surprised me when DeKay gave me this job as head janitor in Cell House No. 1 because the man that holds it must be pretty much of a trusty. You see this is the house where all the long timers are celled and the hard-boil and the death cell are in this house and the head janitor's work is to wait on these men. He goes at any time to any part of the building and there would be nothing to hinder him slipping in a knife or a hacksaw and give it to the parties that might want it.

I was moved down to the bottom row and put in the cell with Dan Ruth so Dan and I were cell-mates again but never partners in the junk business any more. As head janitor I was allowed to stay out until 8 o'clock at night. The rest were locked up at six o'clock.

At that time DeKay had four lock-ups each evening in that house, 4:30 p. m., 5:30 and 6:30 and 8:00. I was the only one left out until 8:00 in Cell House No. 1. My two assistant janitors went in at 6:30. So there was a good deal of responsibility on me.

Dan and I remained cell partners until just a few days ago when he was taken outside the walls and given a job cooking at the guards' quarters.

The second day after I became head janitor of House No. 1, Guard Fields, who was cell house tender, the day guard in charge of No. 1—came to me and called me to one side and with a scared look on his face said:

"Have you been carrying any saws into the hard-boil row?"

I told him I had not.

"There is one thing sure, Pat," he then said, "if you carry any package of any kind, any note, or anything, from one cell to another or from one con to another, or if they give you anything to carry just don't say anything about it and take it and bring it to me." He talked in a manner to make me think he wanted to encourage me to get the men to give me something so I could bring it to him.

"Look here, Mr. Fields," I said, "it is not my intention to double-cross you in here which you have no doubt been told that it was, by the bon-ton clique who are jealous of my being here on this job; or by the two janitors who work with me who no doubt dislike me for being given this job. I am not going to double-cross you. And I give you my word

on that and that I will not carry packages, parcels, notes, gatling guns, six-shooters, dynamite and so on from cell to cell; but if a man locked up offers me a package or note to be carried to some other party, before accepting it I will tell him of my promise to you and if it contains anything he would not wish to pass through your hands that I don't want him to give it to me, for I am not going to work up some scheme to get my fellow-prisoners into trouble."

"In addition to that," I told him, "I have noticed, Mr. Fields, that you have occasionally been giving the keys to the janitors to lock and unlock men—don't ever offer those keys to me or ask me to turn them on a fellow-prisoner for I will not do it. I am a servant and not a guard. Now if this is not satisfactory I will go back in the yard."

Well, what I said to Fields must have made a hit with him for he became my friend. He absolutely trusted me and believed in me.

A few days later a trap was laid for me but the party that laid the trap sprung it on himself. He told Fields that I was going to carry a knife to a certain negro who was supposed to be a bad actor in the hard-boil. He even went so far as to describe the knife and told Fields the day he should search the negro and get it. But the next day he was caught trying to slip the knife he had described to the negro himself.

The fellow who tried to frame me celled on the top tier and the negro on the bottom row so he tried to let the knife down to the negro on a string. The negro had wanted me to carry things to him that I should not and had put in with the other fel-

low to get me and would have told them I gave him the knife.

But it was one scheme that didn't work.

The yard at that time, under the captain in charge, had lost all discipline. Nights after lock-up the cons would call from one tier of cells to another and from cell to cell and cell house to cell house. They would sing, whistle, yell, scream, and some would beat on the sides of the cells until anybody that wanted to could neither sleep, read or have a little peace. They would keep up this racket until long after lights were out. About one night a week they would have what the cons called a pow-wow, which is a riot. They would throw any bottles or other articles they could from their cells; they would pound and hammer the bars and walls of their cells and shriek and yell until about three o'clock in the morning. My God, how I would wish I was far away, locked in some lonely dungeon where I could neither see or hear any human being, when they would have those riots. But those who felt like I did were helpless. They could not stop the others and the guards would not try until the riot got started good and proper and then they couldn't stop it. Warden DeKay would come in and lock up whole tiers of cells on bread and water for a day or two and if there were some men on that tier that had not made noise they suffered for the rest.

It was the captain's fault. One guard said he had spoken to the captain and the captain had said: "Just let the boys go, as long as they quiet down by 9:30 lights out." Of course when 9:30 would come

the men were worked up to riot pitch and there was no "quiet" to it. A little firmness at the beginning would have stopped it all—just a word to the beginners of it would have made them know nothing like that could be pulled and they would have quit. But instead of that there was weak talk and cons don't respect a guard that doesn't talk firm and back it up. Weakness just invites prison riots and noise and rioting is like starting of a large fire in a haystack—grab the hand that strikes the match and you have it out of danger, or leave it go a little while, and it is beyond your control.

Under that captain then in charge the cons would go in any shop they wished without permission. The blacksmith shop and the kitchen became prominent loafing places. The head cook was given no protection to keep them out of the kitchen. Some would go in and help themselves to anything they wanted and again some accused the cook of peddling food; (but I am prepared to say there were private messes for the favorite element). The other I don't know. But for the favorites the best was picked out from the main line mess. When the meat was issued from the store-room to the kitchen with the daily supplies the flesh would be stripped from the bones for the bon-ton element and the bones would be cut up and boiled and dished out on the main line mess.

This was one of the evils of no discipline during that administration. Our main line mess would be served with carrots boiled in plain water and chopped bone and sit down to it and look across at

the others of the bon-ton living on the fat of the land that had ought to have been divided equally.

There is a shop below the kitchen in the basement in which there was also always a great leak of food issued. This shop was very handy, being right under the kitchen. Usually there were six men employed in it. You could go in it and see them sitting down to a spread that would make a restaurant man jealous. Each one of these six would go and get his friends and bring them down in this shop to join them in their big feasts. This was all state food, mind you, that had been taken from the rations for all. We were divided, you might say, into three factions. One faction weeded from the state grub and lived off the best; another faction had money sent to them or were junk makers and had money they got for that—this faction I belonged to—we sent out and bought our food; the other faction who had no money and were quiet and of a retiring disposition went into the big mess and ate what was left for them. Poor fellows, they simply laid down and suffered under the treatment they got. That is why I say it would be safer and cheaper and better for the convicts to have an old experienced man as captain of the yard.

Of course no one would want a brute of the old school, but a good, firm, square man. What few old time officials who looked on convicts as brutes are passing out of date, the world is getting enlightened and I will say this: Idaho is pretty well in the lead of most states in its humane way of handling its wrongdoers—still it has room for improvement.

One thing, instead of having the men laying around in idleness, just put some kind of a factory in the prison that could be run for the benefit of the cons and the state. Make clothing and shoes for the other state institutions such as the two insane asylums, the reformatory, the orphans' home, etc., and pay the men a percentage of the profit for their work, say a third or a half, and the rest of the profit go to the state. The men would feel better and would go out into the world better men physically, mentally, morally, and the state would be relieved of a big expense as they now have to buy clothing, shoes and so forth at a high price. And in addition to that the percentage a man receives could be sent to his wife and family, if the man has one, to help support them. So it would benefit a good many people if the cons were kept at useful labor.

Of course I do not suggest that factories be put in for the benefit of contractors or wealthy individuals which has been the curse of many prisons, especially in the south, where for minor offenses men have been sentenced to long terms at the most dangerous and hardest labor under revolting conditions in coal mines, on farms, in lumber camps and similar places, and which places were owned by wealthy persons or corporations who permit their superintendents to mistreat these poor Americans with such beastly inhumanity that the United States government has stepped in in some cases and sent some of the brutal task-masters to federal prisons for long terms.

But it seems to me that industries conducted by the state and with proper regard for the good of all concerned would be a benefit if carried on inside the prison.

CHAPTER IX.

DEVELOPING A PAYING BUSINESS.

During the summer my junk was selling fast. Good people outside were taking an interest in me and helping me sell my articles. Especially the Murphy Cigar company was helping dispose of the junk I made. Their stores in Boise were handling the articles. And before I go any farther, I wish to make it plain here that Fred Murphy, the principal owner of these stores, is in no way whatever related to me, but was an entire stranger until his stores were allowed to handle my junk and his assistance to me has been entirely disinterested. It seemed to me that it is only fair to all parties to have this understood.

Fred Murphy and his manager, Mr. Dwyer; his assistant manager, Mr. Snyder; Mr. Pond, head clerk of one of the largest stores in Boise, and others of the Murphy company have taken a deep interest in selling my junk and have helped me in every way they can. Mr. Dwyer has gotten other business men over the state interested and many of these also are handling my junk.

That fall, when the days got short and daylight saving went into effect, eight o'clock came long after dark. The wall guards had been taken off the

wall at six and myself and a few others whose work kept them out until late were still left out until eight o'clock. I could go any place in the yard I wished the same as the rest but I never ventured outside the cell house after it became dusk. Some of the night guards thought I was afraid of boogie-boos, I reckon, and one night they asked me to make a trip to the hospital on an errand for them. The hospital was on the farther side of the yard.

I told them all right, but I wanted one of them to go with me. The guards looked at me in a surprised sort of way. Still I insisted that one go with me. On the way to the hospital the guard who finally accompanied me said:

"Pat, why wouldn't you come over here alone?"

I related to him what had happened to me when I first came in as a fish and how I had been framed into the hard-boil.

"I'm not taking any chances of that happening any more," I told him, "and by having you along I've got an iron-clad alibi that would be hard to break by some con who might have a motive and go to the front and say I had been trying to get over the walls."

The guard went right into the air when I told him this. "Just let them try it," he said. "I'm a new man—I've only been here a few weeks, but I know one thing, Murphy, you have friends out front. Mr. Lester told me in particular that you could be trusted, but there were others he told me to watch if they were out late."

The names of those Mr. Lester told the guard to watch were all short-timers.

What the guard told me made me feel pretty good, because Mr. Lester, who was deputy warden, had been an Indian fighter in the early days of Idaho and he has been connected with prisons for the last forty years and what time he was not directly associated with prisons he has been an officer of some kind so you might say he has been handling the so-called criminal class all of his life and his judgment of men was considered the best by all. So I will admit it made me feel good that a man like him, who knew me as a lifer as I was, considered I was a man to be trusted much more than men with short sentences and I became more determined than ever to see that he never had any reason to think otherwise. It is things like that that encourages a man.

That winter as my janitor work would keep me much of the time away from Cell House No. 3, I made arrangements with other parties to use my tools and buy all the material they could make into junk and turn out in the rough. Then I would bring the junk into No. 1 House and I would polish it and give them a percentage of the junk for their work.

In that way I kept the business growing. Just about this time another election changed the tables in politics and Mr. Cuddy became our new warden. Mr. Cuddy was experienced with prison work, having been connected with the prison many years ago. And most of the help he brought with him were experienced men.

Mr. Cuddy, himself, is a benevolent old man of sixty odd years and he is a strong advocate of

prison reform but he keeps his ideas well within the bounds of reason. He put the thumb screws on all riots, on the yelling from cell to cell, right off the reel; he abolished all private messes and stopped the different leaks on the food that was issued—the bon-tons had to get on the same mess with the rest of us. All ate together, at the same time, at the same tables and of the same food. The prisoner who was head man of the shop just beneath the kitchen and who had been robbing our stomachs went out, his time having expired. The rest of the crew was removed, as was also the head cook and Dan Ruth became head cook. They guaranteed Dan backing by keeping all loafers out of the kitchen. The food immediately got better. We all ate well and not only that but Mr. Cuddy gave us fish twice a week and milk and sugar every morning, something that was never before issued to the prisoners in the history of the penitentiary and we all enjoyed this—not just a special few.

In addition to the better food the men got, the books show that the expense of feeding the cons was much less than it was under the previous inexperienced warden and captains.

Mr. Cuddy's deputy was Mr. John Welker, an old experienced officer, having worked here before and who had spent many years handling men at other prisons. Some said he was cranky, but he was firm and just.

Our parole officer was Mr. George Welker—these two Welkers are no relation to each other, but just happen to be of the same name. I believe some of the officers and cons call the parole officer

"Parson" which is a nickname I suppose, because he is not a preacher, but the parole officer under DeKay was. The parole officer, Mr. Welker, was a sheriff at Lewiston, Idaho, for many years, and which city is his home. He is well liked by the cons. He does all he can for us and if word is received at the prison that some boy's mother is laying at the point of death the parole officer will go before the governor and ask for a reprieve for the boy so he can be allowed to visit the bedside of his mother. This has been done in several instances, but before it is, Welker is always sure he is right, and he has always been successful.

Along in June last summer Mr. Tom Jolly came on the scene and went to work here as the Cell House Tender in No. 1 House, in other words he was day guard at this house. Years ago he was employed at the prison as Turnkey and Captain of the Yard. This was his first work at the prison since 1913 and for the last few years he has been connected with the police force. Mr. Jolly has been an officer of the law for the last 25 years. A lot of the time he has been serving as high sheriff. Jolly is strict if necessary but could not be mean if he wanted to.

Last summer, owing to a shortage of guards, Mr. Jolly put most of his time in the yard. This called him away from Cell House No. 1. He put confidence enough in me to leave me in care of the house. My instructions were to allow no one to enter. When some of the cons found out that extra duty called Jolly away from the house they would come to me and want to make a trip to their

cells, giving all sorts of excuses. But I would stop these birds at the door of the cell house and tell them they would have to get permission from Mr. Jolly and bring him personally to give it. Some of them threatened to go to the warden and get me fired. But I kept them out because it was orders and it seemed to me the only right thing to do. I realized the trust Mr. Jolly had put in me when he left me in charge alone to care for the house and not that I wanted to appear important, or had an idea that I was an officer, but because I was determined to try and hold up the hands of the man that had believed in me and trusted me, I kept the cons out and obeyed my instructions, even if some of the cons did try to bluff or get sore about it.

That has been my motto ever since I have been here. When anyone believes in me to try and not disappoint them.

Just recently a guard told me, and who is still connected with the prison, that when he arrived here as an official some months ago Deputy Warden Welker pointed me out to him and said:

"There is Pat Murphy, you can trust him; I never see him idle; he is studying books, making junk or doing something all the time, he is the most determined man I ever saw and he is one of the best prisoners here." Now I confess this is encouraging to have old experienced men like Welker and Mr. Lester and others hold that opinion of me. But I cannot understand how they know this as I have never tried to hang around them, flatter them or button-hole them; and I have never told them this myself. Of course I know in my heart I am

going on the square but I do not understand how they know it.

Well, as another winter came on,—which is the one just passed—my junk making outfit became too small to supply my outlet. I had on hand at this time a few hundred dollars I had accumulated, so I bought out Harry Orchard who was the largest junk maker in the prison during the fourteen years of his confinement. Harry was pretty well stocked up in this line. In the bargain I got all his finished and unfinished junk, also his large lathe machine, which is the only one of its kind in the prison, also a lot of first class tools of all descriptions. The lathe machine was sent to Harry some years ago and it alone cost over \$700 new. I gave him \$450 cash for all the stuff he had.

Harry had made and mended shoes for the state for so many years that they finally let him buy leather and make shoes to sell to the visitors, so he had bought a shoe making machine for that purpose and decided to go out of the junk making business for good.

Now that I had all these tools it was up to me to find a place to put them so I could use them. Finally I went to Captain Jolly and told him how it was and he allowed me to bring the big lathe machine into Cell House No. 1 and use the outfit there and this was a great privilege. It was a pretty bold thing for me to ask but Jolly proved true blue and consented; first, however, he said he would have to talk it over with the warden. He went out front and pretty soon he came back with a smile on his face and said he and the warden had

decided to let me bring the machine into Cell House No. 1.

I believe I became for the time being the happiest man on earth, not alone for what I myself might be benefited from these things but to realize that they had put so much trust and confidence in me.

CHAPTER X.

GETTING INTO BUSINESS IN EARNEST

It took eight men to carry the lathe machine from where it was at Harry Orchard's place to Cell House No. 1. After I got the machine up I found I would have to have an electric motor to run it. I bought a two-horse power motor and what wire was needed for connections. The motor and wire cost me \$140.00. There was a meter put in so I would pay for the electricity I used which came from the city. Altogether it cost me about \$600.00 to get fixed up, but I could sure make junk now.

My outfit was ten times more costly and better than all the other junk outfits in the prison combined. It was quite an improvement from the time when I was a fish rubbing bones down on the rocks to make toothpicks without any tools whatever, while now, I just throw on the switch and let the machinery do the rest. So some of the boys who looked at me as being hopeless less than five years ago have another thought coming now.

I sold the old outfit I had and am done with Cell House No. 3 for good. But I was under a mental strain all the time the machinery was in House No. 1 for the great confidence that had been

put in me caused me to be constantly on the alert through fear that in some way some tool might wander into the hands of some foolish prisoner. I realized the trust that was put in me and was constantly on guard, and saw that no con got near the machinery without my eyes on him. It was a great responsibility, for to have allowed an inmate to have used any one of these tools in a way that might prove injurious to the men who had made it possible for me to have this privilege would have proved me to be a cur of the worst type.

Now after one winter's use with this machinery in House No. 1 I found that in the place it was on account of the danger of something happening if I did not watch day and night almost that I could not turn it loose as I wished and then again I wanted to get more machinery. Then I studied out the plan of building a shop of my own.

Finally I found Warden Cuddy and Captain Jolly together and talked it over with them. I showed them the advantage it might be to the state to let me have a shop that was private and at my own expense. I wanted to build a regular work shop at the outside front corner of House No. 1. I showed them the logic of it—how it would benefit the state and benefit me. As they are both men above the average intelligence they saw how if I was given this privilege it would be possible for me, in a few minutes' time with my machinery, to repair minor breaks on the state automobiles or other machinery such as the state pump and so forth if such repairs were needed. And this too without any cost to the state. In addition to saving

money it would save time as they would otherwise have to send away because the state had no machinery such as mine.

Warden Cuddy and Captain Jolly allowed me to build my shop.

So I put up the workshop I am now in. I used new lumber, have seven windows in the shop, a cement floor and it is well painted. To put up this shop cost me \$180.00. I bought a few dollars more of electric wire to make necessary connections and pay for what power I use to run the machinery. Also have two electric lights which I turn on every evening when I leave the shop. Out front and around the shop was originally nothing but scattering rocks. I got permission to remove the rock and in their place I put good soil and I have planted a beautiful lawn and flower beds. The green grass and flowers look pretty nice inside the prison walls where most of the rest of what one can see is just bare ground and rocks with the rock-walls all around and a little sky overhead. You might say it is a little like bringing a bit of God's out-of-doors inside where eyes that otherwise wouldn't see any of it can keep from forgetting how beautiful the wide meadows and the green hills and the valleys beyond "gray walls" really are.

I just recently bought a large finishing or polishing machine which would ordinarily have cost new \$200.00. This machine, which is in good running order I bought at a greatly reduced price and it is my intention to buy more machinery and keep building up and up and up—

I believe the only way that is within the reach

of my power to repay the good officials and the people at large who have interested themselves in a way to lighten my burden and make my road brighter is to do the best I can with what I have and make good inside the prison as far as in my power. To do that I must build up and up and make my work succeed not only in producing more junk and better junk but by developing my own ability to the best of my opportunity.

Many people have written me letters and I wish I could reproduce them here but it would take too much space and yet I would like for all the world to know that there are many good people outside of prison walls who are thoughtful of those who are inside. Some of these letters have some wonderful things in them and I am going to print at least a few because the ideas they have given me seem to be for the general betterment of prison conditions and the lives of prisoners. I do not want to take the liberty of giving the official names but the letters are as they were written.

An official showed me the following which was written to him by another old official who had had much experience with prisons.

“Butte, Mont., Oct. 18, 1919.

“Mr. G——

Box 58, Boise, Idaho.

“Dear Friend:—I just received yours of the 15th inst. stating you had gone to work at the Idaho State Penitentiary and as I realize you have had no experience in work of that kind I am going to take the liberty of giving you a few pointers

which I have learned from broad experience in handling criminals. You will find the convict as a rule about the same as any ordinary man outside. Do not always look at a prisoner for what he has been or it is supposed he has done—look at him for what he is and for what he is trying to do. You will find some of them with a strong sense of honor, especially among those who have been sent up for the rest of their natural lives * * ” (there is then some personal reference to myself which expressed confidence in me and which I will not publish because I do not want to be placed in the position of blowing my own horn and which it might sound like I was doing if I printed the rest of the letter). The letter was from an officer formerly here and I publish it just to show that there are some men who handle prisoners who have the power to see that even inside of prisons men are still men.

On January 1st, 1918, I wrote a letter to a well-to-do business man of Halfway, Oregon, whose address was given me by a guard. I wrote and told him I was in the penitentiary serving a life sentence and asked him to sell my trinkets and I got the following reply:

Halfway, Oregon, March 13, 1918.

“Mr. Patrick Murphy,

Boise, Idaho.

“Dear sir:—Mr. N. D—— handed me your letter and in reply I will say we have two boys who are very much interested in helping you and you may send anything you have to us and they will try and sell it for you. We are all sympathy for

anyone in your position and I sincerely trust that some way, some time, you may walk out and again become a free human being.

"I have a little magazine sticking around somewhere, written to prisoners, and I am going to take the liberty of looking it up and sending it to you. I greatly admire your courage and ambition in trying to produce something to help support yourself. Personally I do not believe in prisons, as I think they fall far short of accomplishing the desired results. It matters not to me what a convict has done, the fact that he still lives, feels, and no doubt, suffers untold tortures, so he has my love and sympathy.

"I just came home from Portland and I saw much of the war while outside. The war is a terrible thing, isn't it? So many soldiers being sent to France. I was over to Vancouver and they now have 8,000—they are expecting 10,000 more in a few days.

"I am a very busy woman, as I not only work in the store but look after sheep as well, but believe me, if you read and would like any kind of reading matter I should be more than glad of the opportunity of sending you anything I have.

"With every good wish to you I am,

Very sincerely,

Mrs. W.——"

It is not necessary to say that such letters as the foregoing are treasures to a man imprisoned—"for the term of his natural life"—behind gray walls. They bring new hope in humankind and speak of a

spirit of friendship in the world that keeps alive the desire in the heart of a man to "make good."

Another letter I prize very much was one from Mr. L. I. Purcell, editor of the Weiser Signal. I had written to Mr. Purcell to help me place my junk and sell it in his town. When I wrote I did not know the business he was engaged in. He responded with a very kind offer to do all he could to help me and published my letter in the paper and it resulted in bringing me several orders.

And there are dozens of others, each one breathing a kindness and spirit to help a man when he is up against it, and they show me more and more that deep down inside of the human race there is a disposition to give every man a show.

CHAPTER XI.

MORE LETTERS AND A BURGLARY.

Before leaving the subject of letters that have been sent to me by people who have interested themselves in my case and the efforts to help me sell the product of my junk shop, I feel inclined to make especial mention of a couple more communications.

In October, 1919, I got a letter from the manager of the Murphy Cigar Stores and whose business calls him to various parts of the state. It was as follows:

"Murphy Cigar Co.,
Boise, Idaho, Oct. 30, 1919.

Mr. P. C. Murphy, Box 58, Boise, Idaho.

Dear Sir—I am leaving Boise in a few days for a loop over the country and will speak to business men on my rounds and get you more orders and will write you in regard to who will sell your articles.

"Yours truly, Dwyer."

Mr. Dwyer kept his word and got business men to handle my articles in several towns. This, in addition to the great interest taken by the salesmen in the Murphy stores in trying to help me dis-

pose of my junk has been a big factor in helping me to build up the business the way I have been able to do.

One store in Weiser that was selling my articles was burglarized.

The news was sent me in the following letter which was written by the gentleman running the place.

"Mr. Pat Murphy, Boise, Idaho.

"Dear Sir:—The Xmas present you sent me was received in good order and please accept my thanks for the same. It meant more to me than if some folks had presented me with a Fifty Dollar Check.

"Now, I have some bad news for you. Sunday night someone broke into my place and cleaned up all the cash that was handy and among other cash they grabbed the money that I had for you. I have a square pipe-case about six feet high, made of plate glass with several glass shelves for the display of goods. In it I had your tray and whenever I made a sale I left the cash in the tray so as not to get it mixed with my own. We had sold everything you sent us with the exception of one paper knife, four rings and five leather tags and I should judge there was about \$20 in the tray.

"The case was always locked, as it stood in the center of the floor, but it was jimmied open and the cash gone, also \$65.00 which I had in the cash register but no goods were taken that I can miss. The thief was evidently after cash and nothing else.

"I am extremely sorry that this happened but of course it could not be helped. I am enclosing a

clipping from the paper so you can see what they say about it. The thief was evidently a slim fellow as he cut the screen on one of the back windows and slipped through the bar that had been put up there to repel just such an attempt. This makes the third time I have been burglarized in five years and I guess they must have me picked for the original E. Z. Mark.

“With best wishes for the New Year I am,
Sincerely yours, F. G.”

I answered this letter and sent him just three times as much junk as the order before. I told him it was certainly no fault of his and for him not to worry on my account as he was a heavier loser than I was. I also enclosed a present for this man, in order to soothe his feelings, a special made charm inlaid with small gold coins, with his initials engraved on it, and told him my loss would only make me work so much faster and harder and that I believed the thief was not a stranger but was someone who no doubt was familiar with his place.

In a few days I got the following reply:

“Mr. Patrick C. Murphy, Boise, Idaho.

“Dear Sir:—Inclosed please find Post Money Order for the sum of \$50.50, being the money received from the articles you sent me. I have nine rings and two charms left, so the stuff checks out O. K. So far no one has lifted anything from the tray and with most of the fellows I give them a good chance to look it over while I am waiting on trade, but I try to keep a weather eye out just the same.

"There are a couple of fellows here want to know if you make a loose-jawed bit, whatever that is. I think I could sell one or two of them if you had them.

"I would also suggest that you send in your next assortment several locket crosses, as I have had calls for them.

"The charm you sent me has been the cause of a lot of favorable comment and I like it very much.

"With kindest personal regards, I am very truly yours,
F. G."

Now I have gotten several letters from this man since and stacks of good letters from other sources which space will not permit me to publish in this story. And just a few days ago I learned for the first time that this good man, F. G., at Weiser, Idaho, for that is the town where he lives, was one time chief of police in a certain western state. The information made me think of how things and people can change. Just a few short years ago I thought a chief of police or an ex-chief of police would be the last man in the world to help anyone, especially a convict.

To have him helping me seemed almost as queer as it did to think about some petty larceny crook such as the one that burglarized his place, and who was on the outside robbing a man who is on the inside of the work of his hands. But the world is full of strange contrasts.

Now what has prompted this ex-chief of police who is an entire stranger to me, and who cannot have any hopes of any earthly gain, to take the

deep interest in me and endeavor to help me to get on my feet is something I cannot explain unless it is just the true brotherly love that is somewhere in the human heart. I will truthfully say that these things put me to thinking.

It is hard for me to resist the temptation to keep on producing letters I have received from people and which have encouraged me but I know it cannot be possible to use much more space in this way. But before I leave the subject of these letters I want to reproduce one from Mr. E. A. Krussman, of Pocatello, Idaho. He is the general secretary of the railroad Y. M. C. A. at that place and I wrote to him about having my junk sold at the club rooms. This is his reply:

“Mr. Patrick C. Murphy, Boise, Idaho.

“My Dear Mr. Murphy:—Your letter of Jan. 13 has been received but we are not in position to say whether we could sell any of the articles or not, however, under the circumstances we should be glad to help you in any matter we can and if you care to send a few here we will be only too glad to dispose of them if possible. Then if the case should be that we could not sell them we will of course return them to you.

“We feel that it is a wonderful thing for you to want to do these things and we want to help you in any way we possibly can. We are sending you, under separate cover, a collection of magazines, hoping they will be of some little use to you.

“Respectfully, E. A. Krussman.”

Now I have received lots and lots of such en-

couragement from men and women in all walks of life, from business men, officers of the law, sheriffs, and so on, and it all goes to show, to me at least, that even yet, in this corrupt old world there are countless good people,—people who, without any chance for personal gain or personal reward, will do all they can to help a man who is down and trying to raise to lift himself up and stand square on his feet once more.

I think this new idea to me is one thing that has prompted me to write these pages. For if I can express in words, my good feelings towards these men and women—among them veteran officers of law whom I one time considered enemies—perhaps it will help many other men who hold yet these wrong opinions to change their views and look on their fellow men in their true light.

After all the human race is one great family coming from where no man knows and journeying to what destination none can tell except as they feel some sort of faith or hope within them. We are all passengers on the same train and it is easier, when we learn how, to smile than to frown; it is better to help than to harm.

And if I myself should ever be so fortunate as to again enter the world and stand once more among free men I think I should understand life as an entirely different thing to that which I thought it five years ago when I became a part of the dim shadows behind gray stone walls.

This I have learned to believe:

The very men once counted enemies, officers who uphold and enforce the laws, as a rule would be the

first to give a man a helping hand. And the first thing I would do were I free, knowing the cloud that lies over me, should I some time light in a distant city where the record of the years are unknown, would be to inform my employer and the chief of police of my past confinement. I would tell them of my intentions and that I wanted to work and go square. Then if later, some petty larceny crook should happen along who I should be so unfortunate as to have known in prison, and recognize me and try to bleed me for hush money, which has occurred in many similar cases, I could tell him to go jump in the lake. He would not be able to tell anything which I myself had not already told, and his very effort to put me in bad, I believe, would justify the faith I would hope, by frankness, to establish in the hearts of my fellow man.

It seems to me that most of the trouble in this world is because people do not understand each other and the motives in each others' hearts.

And I believe a man, when he determines to do it, can make good anywhere and under any circumstances.

CHAPTER XII.

THINGS FIVE YEARS HAVE TAUGHT.

Like every prisoner, perhaps, who has ever been confined behind stone walls, I myself dream always of a day that may come when I might have the chance to once more be a man and citizen. This is the hope that does not die in a man's heart. And even to one who hears the doors slammed behind him and his sentence is "for the rest of his natural life" there is still somewhere, deep down in him the hope that if he does the best he can and proves that he is trying to do the best that he can he will finally be granted a few years at least of freedom before he dies.

That hope naturally is in my heart. I say so frankly because in all this story I have simply desired to tell things as they are. And I do not want to be misunderstood in anything.

But I want to say I will never play the hypocrite to get free. If I cannot win the confidence and respect of those around me while I am in prison by playing square I could not win it by pretending something that was not true. Peering into the gloom of long winter nights, thinking in the solitude of my cell during gray, dull days—facing on every side the grim rock-walls that surround me

and which have surrounded me for five years, I have seen things I never saw before and I have learned things that a few years ago I could not have believed. But now I know there is a squareness inside of human beings. The people who have befriended me inside of prison and tried to help me have made me know this is true.

So I have tried in this story to tell the simple truth about things. The facts I have written are true and if I was told that by their publication I would be cut off from all hope of ever going free—and I want to say that the man who walks outside of prison walls with all the world his to look upon and to feel himself a part of, is hardly able to realize what that word “freedom” means—yet, I would say “Publish it and I will die here in prison.”

It is my nature to yield quickly to kindness and to be a friend of those who have been a friend to me. And I am stubborn. This I know. I suppose a phrenologist would say I have the stubborn bump highly developed for I know I cannot be drove with a whip one inch and it is that little kindness and trust showed to me by Warden Snook after I had been lied on and jobbed into solitary five years ago that has gotten my stubborn bump headed the right way and it has been helped along some by a few who have tried to push me down because it made me more determined than ever to make good.

If Warden Snook and Captain Roberts had not shown some little sign of kindness and that they believed in me I am satisfied I would now be what the world calls a hopeless incurable criminal and perhaps chained to a madhouse wall forever. I

know this is the nature of my heart. It is the nature of most men—to trust when they are trusted and to doubt when they are doubted.

And that is why I should like to say to those handling men in prisons: Never deal with them in revenge for they will have a spirit of revenge grow up inside of them and deal with you in revenge in return; but deal with them firmly, strongly, and with the idea of discipline but never with revenge. And I will say to the convict: If an officer shows a sign to help you or trust you never throw him down but hold up his hands by showing by your actions that you appreciate his faith in you. By doing that you will be helping the man who is trying to help you and by helping him you will be helping yourself. Not only that but you will be befriending as well all other convicts in general. When the public reads of a prisoner being favored with a parole and then failing to make good or of one running away from the honor gang on the prison farm it hurts all the men who are sticking square and trying to live up to better things. Those who are not running away, or who are making good, are not heard about because they want the past forgotten and do not boast in the papers that they have made good.

I just received a letter a few days ago from an ex-convict who handles thousands of dollars in money for his employer and in such a way that it would be easy for him to get away with it. His employer knows all about his past but trusts him and he is now absolutely on the square.

Sometimes I wonder which is harder:—To never have fallen into the depths and to live always on the sunlit slopes of the mountainside or to have plunged deep, deep, into the abyss and then in spite of hell, in spite of all doubts and fears and dreads, climb back up and up and up!

In conclusion I want to say that this book is not written as a literary masterpiece. It has made no pretentions at literary excellence. I have simply wrote it to try and tell the world what a man sees, what he feels, and what he faces when prison doors swing shut behind him.

And I wanted to tell, too, the story of my own fight to build up the junk business such as I have built up—starting without a cent, without a tool, and with a life sentence hanging over my head.

I have not spoken much of religion. Christianity is a good thing. But I have made no pretense of “lip religion.” It does not appeal to me. I have come to see things different to the way I saw them five years ago. And even here, inside of this prison, I have found opportunity to discover good in the hearts of men and honesty in the lives of others. That is what appeals to me.

If a man is faithful, truthful, true to his fellow-men and lives with a desire to help and feel for someone besides himself it seems to me he is pleasing his Maker and is practicing the real doctrine of the Master who said:

“Love ye one another and God will love you.”

And I wish to further state, for the benefit of those who might, unthinkingly, wish to condemn or criticize a fellowman who has undergone a term in

prison and is stamped with the convict brand and who has also, no doubt, paid a hundredfold for his act, just remember these words I say to you :

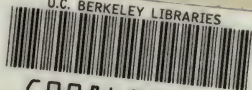
*When your bones and my bones,
Have for years been mouldering
in the dirt,
Who can tell whose bones it was
That wore the convict shirt?*

THE END

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